

February 15, 2006

Dear Mr. Hewett:

Thank you for your note. I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with your group to discuss these and any other questions you and your members may have. I can speak to the state's role and also to my personal experience as a family practice physician. I'm sure that Eric Grims would be happy to participate to explain his agency's role and to answer questions as well.

We have an obligation and a desire, regardless of the outcome of this or any other program, to address the many questions Vermonters have about residential recovery initiatives. We'd appreciate your participating with us in this dialogue. Your members may be interested in the enclosed letter to the Greensboro Select Board.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Jarris, MD
Commissioner

February 8, 2006 (e-mail)

Dear Dr. Jarris,

My name is John Hewett, and I am the President of the Greensboro Association, a 600 plus community improvement association, started in 1934.

Let me list the reasons I feel that establishing a residential mental health facility in the middle of Greensboro is a poor idea:

1) If the goal of the facility is to rehabilitate patients so that they can return to society, they need to be in any environment where they won't stand out as unusual. Greensboro is a small town: everyone knows everyone else, and there is no way that a patient would be looked at as other than, "I wonder what's wrong with him?" Also, there is no large community near enough so that a patient could wander through a WalMart or other large store, shop at a supermarket, or go to a restaurant without being identified as someone "not local."

2) The nature of the Greensboro community is unusual. The population in the winter is about 500 and increases to 2,500 in the summer. It has been that way for over 100 years, and many of the families that come for a part of the summer have been doing so for several generations. Whether the establishment of a residential health facility in the middle of town would have a direct impact, I do not know, but the possibility of an indirect impact (ie. property sales, people renting for a summer vacation, decrease in traffic at our local inn, Highland Lodge, etc.) is very real. Often perception is reality, and that could well be a major factor in this situation.

3) The possibility of such a facility arriving in Greensboro was "announced" in such a way (I first read about it in USA Today!) that a climate of distrust was immediately

established. Of the people I have talked or communicated with not a single one has thought it was an acceptable project. The climate for a successful placement is about zero, I believe.

I hope, after careful review, you will decide that Greensboro is not the place for this facility.

Sincerely yours,

John B. Hewett, President

Greensboro Association